REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider the present application in view of the foregoing amendments to the claims and specification and the following remarks.

Status of the Claims

In the present Amendment, claims 4, 5 and 12 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein and the remaining claims have been amended. Also, claims 13-20 are allowed as stated in the outstanding Office Action. This makes claims 1-3, 5-11 and 13-20 as pending in the present application.

No new matter has been added by way of these amendments because each amendment is supported by the present specification and/or is minor in character. For example, the amendment to claim 1 has support from the subject matter of canceled claim 4 as well at least at page 11, lines 15-18 of the (original) specification. The dependencies of some claims have changed also. Applicants note that the original claims contained multiple dependencies. The other claim amendments correct grammatical errors. Thus, these are clarifying and not narrowing amendments. By deleting/amending these terms in order to clarify the claimed invention (e.g., "A method" to "The method"), Applicants in no way are conceding any limitations with respect to the interpretation of the claims under the Doctrine of Equivalents.

Based upon the above considerations, entry of the present amendment is respectfully requested.

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In view of the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw all rejections and allow the currently pending claims.

Abstract

The originally filed PCT specification included an Abstract. However, on February 26, 2007, a substitute specification was filed but the Abstract was inadvertently missing. Applicants have herein amended the PCT Abstract wherein, e.g., legal language such as "comprising" has been replaced with "having". No new matter has been added.

Claim Objections

Claims 1 and 13 are objected to due to the recitation of "characterised" instead of "characterized" ("characterised" originates from the corresponding PCT application, wherein this spelling is used in Europe). The grammatical errors have been corrected. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection are respectfully requested.

Issues under 35 U.S.C. § 112, Second Paragraph

Claims 1-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, for asserted lack of definiteness (see page 3 of the Office Action). Applicants respectfully traverse, and reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Applicants respectfully refer the Examiner to claim 1 as shown herein (claim 12 has been canceled), wherein this claim recites a proper method step. Thus, it is believed that this rejection has been overcome. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.
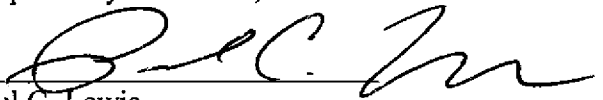
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Conclusion

A full and complete response has been made to all issues as cited in the Office Action. Applicants have taken substantial steps in efforts to advance prosecution of the present application. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance issue for the present case.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Eugene T. Perez (Reg. No. 48,501) at the telephone number of the undersigned below.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37.C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.14; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: January 10, 2008

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment: Abstract (clean copy)

PCL/ETP/clb